



Inside This Issue:

A Neighbor in Crisis	1-2
A Change of Seasons	1-2
DEM Employee Spotlight	2
An Intern's Perspective	2
Training Calendar	3
Volunteer Opportunities	3
Photo Gallery	3

From the Director's Chair

A special note of thanks to our partners; local, state, and federal government and their respective agencies; the NFL Host Committee, and all those who worked so diligently to assure that Miami-Dade County shone in the spotlight of the Pro and Super Bowls this year.



A Neighbor in Crisis *By Curtis Sommerhoff*

On January 12th a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the Republic of Haiti; devastating its capitol city of Port-au-Prince. Miami-Dade County has one of the largest Haitian populations in the U.S and in support of this community has historically stepped up and supported relief efforts during Haiti's more trying times. This horrific event was no exception, though it precipitated a far greater impact locally than ever before.

Within the first twenty-four hours the County Departments of Emergency Management (DEM), Human Services, Fire/Rescue (MDFR) and the 3-1-1 Answer Center engaged in the disaster relief operations. I would be remiss if I did not mention that though the aforementioned agencies served from the onset, all County agencies were engaged in the relief efforts.

Further uniting in our efforts to facilitate an expeditious and effective operation were several of the County's steadfast partners. These included the; Miami-Dade County Public Schools, American Red Cross of Broward, Greater Miami & the Keys, Switchboard of

Miami and many of the Miami-Dade Municipalities.

In the days that followed, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated to a Level 2 and worked with our partners to develop and implement plans for the donation, collection and transportation of goods; documenting the relief activities of Community Based and Non-governmental Organizations as well as local business and establishing links for information and communication sharing. Additionally, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Task Force 1 arrived in Haiti and began search and rescue operations, the Board of County Commission passed a Haiti Relief resolution and area hospitals began receiving medical evacuees.

By Friday, January 15th it became apparent that Miami-Dade County would play a central role in the Federal government's repatriation mission. Flights began arriving into Miami International Airport and Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB) with little notice and limited information on the needs of passengers.



Residents of Port-au-Prince gather in the street following the devastating earthquake.



Just a few of the hundreds of pallets of bottled water donated for the County's Haiti Relief Drive.

To support this effort and assist with direction and control, the EOC expanded operations to 24 hours per day. Working through the weekend DEM developed a plan that transitioned repatriation support to the HARB EOC and scaled back the EOC hours of operation. DEM staff would have a presence at the base around the clock for the next twelve days.

Con't page 2

► ► Be counted in the 2010 Census! census.gov ◀ ◀

A Change of Seasons

By Roslyn Viterbo



Miami-Dade County is undergoing its change of seasons; though not how you might expect. Everyone knows by now that the South Florida hurricane season is over but how many are aware that the peak of wildfire season is right around the corner.

You may be thinking that wildfires needn't be a concern of yours; you live in neighborhoods with neatly manicured lawns or in urban areas where the buildings outnumber the trees. Well, don't start depleting your disaster supplies or unpacking your evacuation kits just yet, you may be in a clearing but you are not out of the woods, so to speak.

The trichotomy of wildfire season aligns with the seasonal conditions; dry, transitional, and wet. The dry season historically starts in January and peaks in mid-May. Fires during this season may be the result of prescribed burns or lightning strikes but 9 out of 10 are human-caused. This is also the season during which wildfires spread more rapidly and grow much larger, posing the greatest risk to our population.

Anyone who lives in or around an area susceptible to wildfires needs to be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice. And while it is true that the actual flames may impact a smaller segment of our

community, it is equally true that the smoke these fires produce may affect a great many more. This smoke contains irritants and contaminants and being airborne will disperse for miles.

When health issues become a concern because toxic smoke is moving into a populated area, the Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management, County Administration and local health officials will often advise residents to move indoors and shelter-in-place. A shelter-in-place advisory is of particular importance for individuals more at risk to problems from inhaling these irritants.

Con't page 2

DEM Employee Spotlight



This quarter our spotlight is shining on Ray Misomali

Congratulations Ray for being voted the DEM's Employee of the Year.

Ray joined Emergency Management in August 2007; having completed his Master's Degree in Public Administration at the University of North Texas where he concentrated his studies on emergency management.

From the start Ray quickly assimilated into the Infrastructure and Recovery Bureau. During his time here he has had primary responsibility for the following programs: critical infrastructure; damage assessment; debris management; drawbridge operations; evacuation; and business recovery.

For the Business Recovery program he developed the standard operating procedure that captures the collaboration process within the private sector; enabling the county to partner with major businesses and Florida International University to create a community that shares disaster specific information during emergencies and facilitates business recovery.

Ray further accepted the lead on the County's Local Mitigation Strategy. This program supports multi-million dollar projects aimed at limiting the impact of hazards in the county.

NEIGHBOR, con't from page 1

While Miami-Dade is no stranger to responding to disasters in the Caribbean, this has truly been an endeavor that has pushed response organizations and tested our capacity to work effectively with all levels of government. There have been many successes and a few lessons learned along the way.

Everyone involved should be proud of what has, and continues to get accomplished. To date, over 250+ tons of relief supplies have been shipped to Haiti for distribution by Food for the Poor; approximately 5,000 American citizens have been repatriated through County points of entry; over 200 disaster victims are being treated in our area hospitals; and our mission continues today.

SEASONS, con't from page 1

This includes people with pre-existing health conditions, such as respiratory or heart complaints, the elderly and young children. For those of us with pets, we must keep in mind that they also fall into the 'at risk' population.

So as we enjoy the wonders of our natural green spaces and wildlands let's keep in mind that when we don't fully extinguish campfires or cigarettes that we are not only putting Miami-Dade County's unique and irreplaceable wildlife and ecosystems at risk, we are potentially endangering the health of our friends, family, and loved ones. One wildfire from a carelessly discarded match can burn thousands of acres and blanket Miami-Dade County with toxic smoke.

And it's not only health concerns brought on by wildland fires. These fires can cause headaches for drivers as well. Smoke can drastically reduce visibility and even cause road closures. Miami-Dade County's main east-west thoroughfare, I-75, was closed in both directions in May 2009 due to visibility issues caused by a wildfire. To quote Smokey: Remember, we can prevent wildfires.

Did You Know?

In 2009 the Florida Division of Forestry fought 3,036 wildfires. These fires destroyed 138,277 acres.

An Intern's Perspective

An Interview with Cynthia Nikolai

Roslyn: You're studying at Notre Dame, what prompted you to come to the Miami-Dade Department of Emergency Management (DEM)?

Cindy: I am pursuing a PhD in Computer Science and the research needs of my dissertation: 'Designing a Virtual Emergency Operations Center (EOC)' warranted that I embed myself in a functional EOC. I explored many options and based on its reputation and achievements chose the Miami-Dade EOC.

Roslyn: Did we meet your expectations?

Cindy: My expectations were exceeded. Within my first two months I served as an active participant in 2 full-scale exercises; the Statewide Hurricane exercise & Operation Cassandra, a terrorism driven exercise.

During the hurricane exercise I served as IT Support; which gave me the opportunity to interact with all staff and observe the Operations Section Chief, seeing firsthand how the EOC effected recovery and response activities.

I was the Documentation Unit Leader for Operation Cassandra working under the Planning Section Chief. Here I witnessed the decision making process involved in developing Incident Action Plans and the tools/forms used in that process. Later in my internship I responded to two actual activations; the Pro and Super Bowls and the Haiti Relief 2010.

Roslyn: What other opportunities were you provided?

Cindy: I worked very closely with the Systems Manager and WebEOC®, the Department's collaboration and communication tool. Utilizing this tool I assisted several different programmatic areas. One such example is the board I developed; in which I inventoried all the equipment and assets held within the DEM and EOC. I further worked on a board that classified 90,000 commercial facilities into 18 different standardized federal sectors.

During my internship I was able to study for and use my acquired knowledge to pass the examination; becoming a Certified WebEOC® Administrator through ESI, creators of the software system.



Cynthia at work on one of her many projects.

"I would to like thank everyone at the DEM for allowing me to successfully acquire all the knowledge and skills that I have. Before I came here I knew little about emergency Management; I have grown tremendously."

Activate!

Volume 2, Issue 1
March 2010

The official quarterly e-newsletter of the Miami-Dade County
Department of Emergency Management

APRIL IS 'VOLUNTEER MONTH'

American Red Cross of Greater
Miami & the Keys
(305) 644-1200
[American Red Cross](#)

Switchboard of Miami
(305) 358-1640 x 139
[Switchboard of Miami](#)

Hands on Miami
(305) 646-7200
[Hands On Miami](#)

Citizen's Crime Watch
(305) 470 - 1670
[Citizens Crime Watch](#)

Miami-Dade Police Dept
Citizens Volunteer Program
(305) 471-2360
[MDPD Citizen Volunteer](#)

Community Emergency Response
Team (CERT)
(305) 468-5400
[CERT](#)

Department of Emergency Management

Main number: 305-468-5400
Fax: 305-468-5401

www.miamidade.gov/oem

3-1-1 Answer Center: **305-468-5900**
Special Needs: **305-513-7700**
TDD: **305-468-5402**

DEM Vision

"A disaster ready community."

DEM Mission Statement

*"To support our community's
disaster preparedness, response,
recovery and mitigation needs
through the coordination of
information and resources"*



The Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management is pleased to announce that Mr. David Perez (shown above), External Affairs Coordinator, was named the 2010 Emergency Management Professional of the Year by the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association (FEPA). This is just one more example of the exemplary emergency management staff serving Miami-Dade County.

Upcoming Trainings

Apr. 7 & Apr. 14 (two consecutive Wednesdays)
Advanced Incident Command System Command & General Staff: Complex Incidents
Miami, Florida
[Apply for this Training](#)

Apr. 22-23
Radiation Emergency Medicine Course For
Emergency Health Care Professionals
Miami, Florida
[Click here for registration](#)

Apr. 26-27
Radiation Emergency Medicine Course For
Emergency Health Care Professionals
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
[Click here for registration](#)

Apr. 28 - 30
Intermediate Incident Command System for
Expanding Incidents
Marathon, FL
[Apply for this Training](#)

For more information on upcoming or online EM courses, click [here](#) for state-sponsored training and [here](#) FEMA's independent study program

Dates to Remember

May 10-13 – State Hurricane Exercise
May 23-28 – Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference

Photo Gallery



Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's Urban Search and Rescue team, Florida Task Force 1, rescues a survivor trapped after the earthquake.



Commissioner Barbara Jordan, staff member Nadia Pierre and DEM Coordinator Loubert Alexis speak at one of the Haiti Relief – Pastoral Meetings held by the Commissioner.

Carlos Alvarez
Mayor

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Dennis C. Moss
Chairman

Jose "Pepe" Diaz
Vice Chairman

Barbara J. Jordan
District 1

Dorrin D. Rolle
District 2

Audrey M. Edmonson
District 3

Sally A. Heyman
District 4

Bruno A. Barreiro
District 5

Rebeca Sosa
District 6

Carlos A. Gimenez
District 7

Katy Sorenson
District 8

Dennis C. Moss
District 9

Sen. Javier D. Souto
District 10

Joe A. Martinez
District 11

José "Pepe" Diaz
District 12

Natacha Seijas
District 13

Harvey Ruvin
Clerk of Courts
George M. Burgess
County Manager
Robert A. Cuevas Jr.
County Attorney